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BALTIMORE BOOKS

Thirteen must-read titles by local authors are perfect for holiday giving A&E

Convergence of 'every bad thing' leads to Clifton-Berea neighborhood having city's lowest life expectancy

KARL MERTON FERRON/BALTIMORE SUN

Ubaid Harris cleans the dashboard of a minivan at a car wash on Federal Street and Edison Highway. He believes more opportunities can help deal with some of the ills that trouble the Clifton-Berea neighborhood. "Poverty is the enemy," he says.

Poverty makes powerful statement

By Yvonne Wenger
The Baltimore Sun

In Ubaid Harris' East Baltimore neighborhood, poverty is fatal.

Babies born to parents in Clifton-Berea will live shorter lives, on average, than babies born to families anywhere else in Baltimore, a new city analysis suggests. Outsized rates of overdoses, chronic disease and violence have pushed local life expectancy down to 67 years — two decades less than in the city's more affluent neighborhoods. In Clifton-Berea, nearly one in three families lives below the poverty level.

Harris, 43, an ex-offender who has worked for years at an Edison Highway car wash, believes opportunity is the antidote for the neighborhood's problems.

KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN

"They taught me a lot."

Dominique Brooks, shown with son Cam-Ron Lee, commenting on Healthy Start's Belly Buddies group

"Poverty is the enemy," he said during a break at work. "If you eliminate poverty, then you eliminate all of these side issues."

Health officials, to a great extent, agree. They say some of the factors that lead to an early death — lack of proper medical care, for instance, and poor nutrition — are driven by poverty.

And the violence endemic in Baltimore's poorest neighborhoods of course plays a role.

A leading contributor to Clifton-Berea's lowest-in-the-city life expectancy is youth homicides. The homicide rate among Clifton-Berea residents under 25 is the equivalent of 107 killings per 100,000 people — higher even than

See **CLIFTON-BEREA,** *page 19*

State boosts opioid care

Federal initiative allows Maryland to expand treatment

By John Fritze
The Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON – Bernard Gyebi-Foster had a problem this year that underscored, on a small scale, the challenge facing public health officials battling the opioid epidemic nationwide.

Gyebi-Foster, executive director of a drug treatment program in West Baltimore, had 44 beds at his center for detox patients. But in the midst of a crisis that's killing more than two city residents a day — more than are dying in the city's historic violence — he had funding for only two-thirds of those recovery slots.

"That left 15 beds unoccupied," said Gyebi-Foster, who runs Tuerk House, one of the city's best-known treatment facilities.

Now a federal initiative being tested in Maryland is showing some early signs of increasing treatment capacity by changing how care is paid for.

President Donald Trump, in declaring the opioid crisis a national health emergency last month, said his administration will expand that change to other states that request it.

Maryland, where overdose deaths are surging, is one of seven states that have been approved to allow large residential centers to bill Medicaid for substance abuse treatment — reversing a prohibition that dates to President Lyndon B. Johnson. Under the new structure, treatment centers receive reimbursement for each patient rather than

See **OPIOIDS,** *page 20*

SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

MARYLAND

AND THE LIGHTS COME ON: The annual "Miracle on 34th Street" heralds the holidays as Hampden residents switch on the lights for the displays that constitute Baltimore's — and Maryland's — gaudiest seasonal display. **NEWS PG 2**

NATION & WORLD

FRENCH CONFRONT SEXISM: French President Emmanuel Macron has launched an initiative to combat violence and harassment against women in France, aiming to erase a sense of shame that breeds silence among victims and changing what he said is the country's sexist culture. **NEWS PG 14**

TODAY'S WEATHER

SUNNY AND BREEZY

52 HIGH | 32 LOW

Sunny on Monday. **SPORTS PG 10**

Maryland's regulations help turn fantasy sports into growth business

Firms join fantasy playing field

SUN INVESTIGATES

By Jeff Barker
The Baltimore Sun

Nearly a dozen daily fantasy sports operators have registered to do business in Maryland, crowding the field in a state that has not clarified its intentions on a pastime whose popularity among sports fans has grown dramatically in recent years.

The office of the Maryland attorney general has held that daily fantasy — in which players seek payouts based on the performance of actual professional athletes — is close enough to gambling that it might require the approval of voters in a ballot referendum.

But the General Assembly has shown little interest in setting a referendum. So Comptroller Peter Franchot issued the state's first-ever regulations to guide the multibillion-dollar industry's operations here.

See **FANTASY,** *page 20*

ALGERINA PERNA/BALTIMORE SUN

At the Tilted Kilt restaurant in White Marsh, Adam Flore of Eaglestrike demonstrates how to use one of the company's fantasy sports terminals. The industry continues to grow, with more than 57 million players in the United States and Canada.

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